



## GOVERNMENT OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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### DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND NATURAL RESOURCES

No. 45 Estate Mars Hill, Frederiksted  
St. Croix, Virgin Islands 00840

CONTACT: Jamal Nielsen, Media Relations Coordinator

TEL: (340) 773-1082

FAX: (340) 713-2430

[jamal.nielsen@dpnr.vi.gov](mailto:jamal.nielsen@dpnr.vi.gov)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **TROPICAL STORM ERIKA PUBLIC ADVISORY**

Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR) Commissioner Dawn L. Henry, Esq., announces that, in anticipation of Tropical Storm Erika, the Division of Environmental Protection (DEP) anticipates negative environmental impacts caused by storm-water runoff.

DPNR advises the public to refrain from using the coastal waters throughout the Territory until further notification. DPNR is also advising parents to instruct their children to keep away from storm water-impacted beaches as well as areas with manholes and storm water flooding. There may be an elevated health risk to anyone swimming in storm water-impacted areas as a result of increased concentrations of bacteria.

All persons should also be aware that storm water runoff may also contain contaminants or pollutants harmful to human health and therefore all persons should avoid areas of storm water runoff (i.e. guts, puddles, and drainage basins). DPNR will continue to monitor the impacted areas and waters.

DPNR also advises the public to complete the following tasks to protect your drinking water resources in preparation for an impending **hurricane disaster and the resulting potential water resources emergency**:

- 1) A two (2) week supply of potable water should be stored in a safe weatherproof place, preferably indoors. This water supply will provide water for drinking, cooking, and bathing. To figure out how much water you will need for a two (2) week supply: multiply the number of residents by 20 gallons per person per day and then multiply that number by 14 days. For example, a family of four should store 1120 gallons of water.  
**(Ex: 4 people x 20 gallons/person/day x 14 days = 1120 gallons)**

- 2) An adequate supply of disinfecting agents [liquid chlorine containing 5.25% sodium hypochlorite (i.e. Clorox), powdered chlorine (active ingredient calcium hypochloride) or iodine] should be on hand and stored in a safe place.
- 3) A supply of sterile potable water bottles and other suitable containers should be secured to store water.
- 4) A list of emergency water supplies may be obtained from the Division of Environmental Protection of DPNR at Cyril E. King Airport, Terminal Bldg. 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Charlotte Amalie on St. Thomas or #45 Mars Hill, Frederiksted on St. Croix.

As a reminder, these precautions should be taken **ONLY** if a major storm or hurricane is imminent and poses a severe threat to your water supply.

Moreover, DPNR advises all contractors, developers, and home builders to immediately maintain and implement additional erosion and sediment control practices at all areas where property is cleared, graded, filled, or otherwise disturbed.

Please take this opportunity to visually locate areas that may need additional erosion and sediment control measures. Measures include, but are not limited to the following:

- Preservation of natural vegetation
- Drainage Swales / Diversions
- Temporary & Permanent Seeding
- Soil Sealers / Binders
- Erosion Control Mats
- Soil Retaining Walls
- Construction Entrances / Exits
- Silt Fencing
- Sediment Traps
- Mulches, Mats & Geotextiles

It is also advised that all construction materials and equipment be removed from sites or be properly secured. **This includes all items likely to become airborne objects** that may cause damage to your property or adjacent parcels.

Commissioner Henry also reminds residents with wind turbines installed on their property to lower their towers before the impending storm and ensure that the perimeter designated as the setback from the property line is cleared of any structures or buildings that may be damaged with the potential of becoming airborne debris.

For more information on Best Management Practices (BMPs), refer to the Virgin Islands Environmental Protection Handbook at <http://www.dpnr.gov.vi/dep/pubs/index.htm>. To report any areas of concern, contact the Division of Environmental Protection Earth Change Program at 774-3320 or 773-1082.